

As he moves on to greener pastures, I wish Director Ryder success in all future endeavors he takes on. I thank Director Ryder for his all-American performance as the 39th Director of the United States Mint.

Madam Speaker, although it pains me to do this as a proud University of Nevada Wolf Pack alum, Director Ryder, thank you for your service again, and go Boise State Broncos.

PENTAGON'S POLICIES FOR REPORTING VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PORTER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PORTER. Madam Speaker, let me start with a few facts.

One: The Leahy Law prohibits the United States from giving military assistance to foreign security forces that commit gross violations of human rights.

Two: The State Department determines whether there have been gross violations of human rights based in part on information from the Department of Defense.

Three: That process is only as good as the information coming in. Without that information, we don't cut off funding, and taxpayer dollars can go to foreign military units that commit rape, murder, torture, and other gross violations of human rights.

When our servicemembers have information on such abuses, they have an obligation to report it to their chain of command, but that is not technically true for Defense Department contractors. That is a problem. In fact, that is a big problem because contractors are a huge part of our military presence around the world. They make up more than half of DOD personnel in Iraq.

At the end of the war in Afghanistan, they outnumbered U.S. troops 17 to 1. And there have been repeated allegations of contractors who failed to report gross violations of human rights, from sexual abuse of young boys in Afghanistan to the torture of prisoners in Yemen.

In December 2019, Congress required the Pentagon to update the relevant policies and regulations. Section 888 of that year's Defense bill required specific guidance to Defense contractors on reporting gross violations of human rights.

Section 888 said to the Pentagon very simply: Put this duty to report human rights violations in your contracts. Include rules about reporting gross violations of human rights and put them right next to the rules for accounting, for purchasing equipment, and for subcontracting.

How has this been working? Not at all.

And why is that?

It is because the Department of Defense has apparently decided it is better to see no evil and hear no evil when Defense contractors witness gross violations of human rights.

The requirements in section 888 are currently 469 days overdue.

Madam Speaker, 204 days ago, my colleagues wrote to the Pentagon asking for an update; 97 days ago, the Pentagon sent a response that is best described with language that is prohibited on the House floor.

The Pentagon's response provided no updates on time, no procedures for reporting gross violations of human rights, and provided none of the other information required under the law that Congress passed. This is completely unacceptable, and what it suggests is that neither human rights nor Congressional oversight are priorities for the Department of Defense.

I urge Secretary Austin and General Milley to find out what is going on with section 888 of the fiscal year 2020 NDAA and fix whatever problems within their departments have led to this unacceptable delay.

This week, Secretary Austin and General Milley testified under oath that we are going to learn the lessons of the war in Afghanistan. The need for strong, clear procedures for contractors to report gross violations of human rights is one of those lessons. It should be an easy one to learn.

VOTING RIGHTS

Ms. PORTER: The right to vote is fundamental. Any threat to any American at the ballot box is a threat to every American's right to representative government.

It is the duty of the Federal Government to protect our Nation's democracy. We need to expand opportunities to vote, especially for young people, people of color, workers with atypical hours, and people with disabilities. We need to crack down on gerrymandering so that voters choose their leaders instead of leaders choosing their voters. We need to modernize voter registration, reform our broken campaign finance system, and prevent election subversion.

This is not a partisan issue. Every American, regardless of who they vote for or whether they even vote, deserves a government that works for them. And that cannot happen when the bedrock of our democracy, the right to vote, is undermined.

In the House, I proudly voted for H.R. 1, the For the People Act, and H.R. 4, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advance Act to safeguard our democracy. But until the President signs democracy protection into law, the work is not done. I will keep fighting for our democracy.

IN RECOGNITION OF DEBORAH HANSEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WALTZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALTZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to thank Ms. Deborah Hansen for her service to the people of Florida's Sixth Congressional District over the last 3 years in my office.

Deborah was born in Salem, Oregon, to her parents, Bill and Fae Hansen. After graduating high school, Ms. Hansen left Salem to attend the University of Utah where she received her bachelor's degree in science and sociology with an emphasis in criminology, social work, and child welfare.

Upon graduating from the University of Utah, Ms. Hansen began her steadfast and inspiring career of public service. Deborah devoted over 30 years of work to the juvenile justice programs in Oregon and Utah. During this time, she also taught criminal justice courses as an adjunct professor for local community colleges.

While attaining all of her accomplishments, Deborah is most proud of raising her four beautiful children—Dustin, Dalton, Dain, and Danelle.

Prior to coming to my office, Ms. Hansen served with Representatives Cresent Hardy from Nevada and Representative Jason Lewis from Minnesota. In 2019, I was fortunate enough to have Deborah join my team as my office manager.

She quickly proved herself to be an invaluable asset, overseeing multiple meetings, the many requests we received, managing the daily operations of my Washington, D.C., office, and most importantly, keeping a freshman Member of Congress on track—no easy task, for sure.

Not only did she keep all of us in line, but Deborah also brought a great spirit to our office. She always brought in baked goods to share, had a new story to tell—whether it be a memory of her time on the West Coast, the latest adventures of her grandchildren, or about some mischief her new puppy, Tucker, had managed to get himself into—we were all ears.

Deborah is diligent; she is talented, hardworking, but above all, she is kind. And while I am sad to see her leave, I can say without a doubt, she has made both our office and our country a better place.

We wish Deborah a happy and hopefully, very relaxing retirement in the country filled with quality time with her four children, 13 grandchildren, and her favorite puppy, Tucker. However, I know this is not the end of Deborah's public service but the start of a new adventure in service to her community.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues and the United States House of Representatives to join me in commending Ms. Deborah Hansen for her lifelong career of servant leadership. From the bottom of our hearts, we wish Deborah the best as she embarks on this next chapter in her life.

2021 CONTRACT DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PLASKETT. Madam Speaker, during one of my floor speeches last week, I shared that President Biden's